

# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MONTHLY REPORT

## JANUARY 2005

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Each month I establish, with input from the Directors, the priority issues on which management and the staff focus. This report summarizes the work that was accomplished during the month as well as other items I feel will give the Council a better understanding of what the staff and I are doing to accomplish our performance objectives.

### **I. Improve the efficiency and accountability of management within the organization**

- Finance staff has prepared and submitted an application to the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) to have the recently completed Financial Statements considered for the GFOA's Award of Excellence.
- Staff prepared a response to a Caltrans email concerning the FY 02-03 Indirect Cost Allocation Program and related presentations in the FY 02-03 Annual report.

### **II. Provide support to the Regional Council in providing direction and Leadership to SCAG**

- On December 1st I attended CFEE's (California Foundation on the Environment and the Economy), planning meeting in Sacramento on the upcoming legislative session with a focus on transportation funding. The planning group also met with Assembly Speaker Fabian Nunez on transportation finance legislation where the Speaker indicated that he wanted to explore innovative financing legislation and included the concept in the Speaker's Message.
- On December 13th & 14th I attended the CFEE Roundtable Conference on Air Quality and Economic Growth at Meadowood in St. Helena. Councilmember Ron Loveridge attended for ARB. The participants were from State Government – Administration, California State Senate, California State Assembly, Local Government, Business/Industry, Environment, Labor, and CFEE. The focus of the conference was funding for the Carl Moyer program with an emphasis on buying older vehicles for goods movement.
- On December 14th our Kern County partners invited us to attend a meeting with Congressman Bill Thomas, Chair of the Ways and Means Committee of the Congress to discuss how the goods movement projects that connect Kern County and our region can be funded.
- On December 15th I along with the transportation and goods movement leadership attended a meeting with Secretary Sunne McPeak in Sacramento regarding the Governor's Goods Movement Program. The Secretary and the attendees received a White Paper that Nancy Pfeffer, SCAG staff, completed on how to solve the ports bottleneck issue in the region.

Since goods movement is of particular current interest to Governor Schwarzenegger, there is an opportunity to seek much-needed state leadership on this issue in Washington. Key needs are for environmental mitigation, streamlined environmental review, innovative funding of infrastructure, and expedited project delivery. At the request of Business, Transportation & Housing Secretary Sunne Wright McPeak, SCAG staff has prepared a white paper on regional goods movement challenges and

system needs. The paper was prepared with the participation of the CEOs of the five county transportation commissions, the two railroads, the three ports, Alameda Corridor Transportation Authority and Alameda Corridor East Construction Authority, OnTrac, Caltrans, the California Transportation Commission, the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce, Metrolink, and the Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation.

- On December 21st President Ron Roberts and I met with Secretary Norm Mineta of the Department of Transportation, Jeff Shane, Undersecretary for Policy and representatives from Congresswoman Juanita Millender-McDonald's office, Dianne Feinstein's, and staff from the Committee on Ways and Means regarding the Congestion Relief Program for the ports that we submitted to the Governor.

### **III. SCAG Operations**

- Finance staff is working with program staff to develop the draft OWP, General Fund, Indirect and Fringe Benefit budgets for Regional Council consideration.
- The draft budgets will be discussed at the February Regional Council meeting and adopted at the March meeting.
- Second interviews were held with the short list for the Director of ISD position. The Director position is expected to be finalized in February.

### **IV. Implement Adopted Regional Plans**

- MAGLEV. Interviews were conducted to select a consultant for the High Speed Ground Transportation Alternatives Analysis along the IOS. SCAG is reviewing a protest that was filed over consultant selection.
- LAX Master Plan. The Los Angeles City Council met on December 7th for a final vote on the Consensus Plan, where it passed 12-3. On the same day, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors unanimously authorized a lawsuit challenging the airport proposal.

Los Angeles officials are negotiating agreements with several cities around LAX to forestall litigation, with \$500 million in proposed community projects. The accord requires Federal Aviation Administration approval and will be reviewed by the Los Angeles City Council. The City Council met on December 14th for required Second Consideration amending the Los Angeles Municipal Code to provide for the Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) Zone and the Zone Change, as well as settlement agreements between the City of Los Angeles and the Lennox and Inglewood School Districts.

LAWA is still in discussions with El Segundo in order to develop a legal agreement holding LAX to 78.9 MAP through passenger gate restrictions. The County of Los Angeles is asking for a similar agreement, which would allow the County to sue the City of Los Angeles if it fails to limit growth at LAX. A key issue in the negotiations are federal regulations which restrict LAX from placing arbitrary limits on passengers or aircraft operations.

- Compass. We've received a letter from Gary Ovitt, Mayor of the City of Ontario, expressing the City's support to explore the possibility of being a Compass 2% Strategy Demonstration Project. We will follow up with the City's Planning Director and SANBAG to further discuss the possibilities.

At the January CEHD meeting, John Fregonese of Fregonese Calthorpe Associates will unveil maps and data lists identifying the 2% Strategy "Compass Opportunity Areas." Focusing efforts in these limited areas can yield the greatest benefit to cities and the region. SCAG will work hand in hand with willing local partners to offer assistance in planning these critical areas, relying heavily on visual aids and maps to illustrate the opportunities.

- Housing. On December 14th at the SCAG office in Los Angeles and on December 15th at UC Riverside Extension, SCAG hosted State workshops for local and subregional agencies on evaluating the potential capacity for infill housing in California, including our region, which is being conducted by UC Berkeley. This important study is being prepared at the request of Ms. Sunne Wright McPeak, Secretary of Business, Housing, and Transportation Agency. The study will identify, map and estimate the potential capacity for infill housing in each community in California. Local governments were encouraged to attend these sessions and provide feedback on the Study because its application may significantly impact future local and regional housing planning.
- RHNA. The Executive Committee, at its December 2nd meeting, directed staff to request that the next update of the Regional Housing Needs Assessment be coordinated with the Regional Transportation Plan. Pending approval by the State Department of Housing and Community Development, the request would allow SCAG to begin the RHNA in the Spring of 2006. The deadline for local Housing Elements would be July 1, 2008. At the same time, SCAG will be assisting Sunne Wright McPeak in developing a new approach for State housing planning.
- Forecasting. The Community Development and Forecasting staff began work on the growth-forecast process for the 2007 RTP/EIR. We are developing 2000 socioeconomic data sets with over 40 variables at new zone system required for new model development and calibration. The 2004 base year analysis was completed in December.

## **V. Develop Additional Planning Efforts**

- Air Quality and Transportation Conformity. At the December 10th meeting of the Transportation Conformity Working Group, staff discussed the new 8-hour Ozone Conformity Determination for the 2004 RTP/2004 RTIP and presented the analysis which resulted in a proposed positive conformity determination for the Searles Valley. Staff will present the proposed Draft 8-hour Ozone Conformity Determination to the Energy and Environment Committee at their January meeting, and will ask EEC to release the package for a 30-day public review and comment period. Overall, the conformity process for the 8-hour ozone is proceeding on schedule. The Federal agencies had requested staff to circulate additional information for public review. This information will be included in the package going to EEC to be released for public review.

- Water Affairs. At its December meeting, the Water Policy Task Force convened a timely and broad review of the current water supply issues that have led to a suspension of “will serve” letters by the County Water Works District (#40) in the Antelope Valley. This has stopped the approval of all development projects in the District’s service area, affecting projects in both Palmdale and Lancaster. Staff has offered SCAG’s support to the water agencies in the Antelope Valley, especially with information needed for preparation of the next round of Urban Water Management Plans due by the end of 2005. With guidance from the Water Policy Task Force, staff is working informally to encourage new discussions on ways to implement comprehensive groundwater management measures in the Antelope Valley, thus avoiding the costs and delays of formal adjudication of groundwater rights. The Task Force will follow these issues, including future water supplies for other areas in the SCAG region that have been projected for significant future growth as presented in our Growth Visioning initiative.

## **VI. Data**

### **Planning Data/GIS**

- Homeland Security Conference. The Southern California Association of Governments in conjunction with the University of California, Los Angeles, sponsored a Homeland Security conference on December 7th. The conference brought together major stakeholders in southern California working on homeland security. The topics covered at the workshop included local and state preparedness, assessing risk, neighborhood and community readiness and nuclear weapons in a changing world. The event was attended by over 100 individuals representing various public agencies from throughout the region.

## **VII. Legislative Program**

- Consensus Program. On February 16th and 17th, SCAG will be joined in Washington, DC by the chairs and chief executive officers LACMTA, OCTA, VCTC, RCTC, SANBAG, and Imperial County to advocate on behalf of the Southern California Consensus Program for TEA-21 Reauthorization. This is the third year this transportation delegation will communicate to our congressional representatives and members of the Bush Administration the need for surface transportation improvements in the region. The reauthorization, which has been repeatedly extended over the last two years, is due to expire on May 31, 2005. The delegation will visit Capitol Hill during the best possible week to influence congressional discussion of the reauthorization.